



June 15, 2005

Dear Community Friends:

Car Related Crimes

As we have reported, car related crimes in the South Precinct have increased dramatically in the past year. We have seen a 67% increase in auto theft and an 87% increase in car prowls, compared to the city averages of increases of 25% and 20% respectively.

We continue to urge you to be vigilant and do what you can to reduce the possibility of becoming a victim of a car related crime. We urge you to report to 911 if you see or experience a car related crime.

We also urge you to not make it easy for the perpetrators of these crimes. Here's what I mean:

- A few weeks ago, a neighbor was returning books to the Beacon Hill Library. The neighbor left the car running while returning the books. A young man on bicycle road up, got off his bike, got in the car and drove off. It is doubtful that the young man was following the individual with the sole intent of stealing the car. It was the fact that the opportunity presented itself.
- In the past week, I've personally noted individuals stopping at convenience stores to get coffee, purchase cigarette, etc. While in the store, they left their cars running. While these individuals did not have their vehicles stolen, it is something that could have easily happened, considering the length of time they were in the store getting their items. Please, let's not make it easy for someone to take your vehicle, or the items in your vehicle.

For other tips to reduce car related crime, please refer to the SPD website.
<http://www.cityofseattle.net/police/prevention/default.htm>

Scams Targeting Our Elders

We've also noted a few individuals who are preying upon our elders with a sympathy or charity scam.

- One, described as a heavy set woman using the names "Kim" and "Pam," has gone to the homes of elderly women and uses a ruse to gain entry into the home. She has used claims of being a block watch captain, a new neighbor, pregnant, or having car problems. She either asks to use the phone or bathroom to gain entry and then asks for or demands money, and/or takes whatever is within reach when the homeowner steps away.
- Another is an adult male claiming to be from ADT wanting to do an assessment of the home to see if the owner qualifies for one of their alarm systems. The individual is vague when asked for more information about the program, for identification, for follow-up contact information, etc.
- Another scam being perpetrated - and not just on elders, is either an adult or a youth, claiming to be collecting for a charity (a program to help get kids off drugs, a program to help scientists make formulas for sick kids, a literacy program through a high school in another part of the city). Again, they have no paperwork about the "charity" or ID they are willing to share about who *they* are in connection with the charity.

What To Do

- **Do not let them into your home!**
- **Do not give cash!**
- Ask for ID and/or literature about the program to see if it's legit.
- Alert your neighbors
- Call 911 if a suspicious charity collector or solicitor comes to your door.

Take Care and Stay Safe!

Mark Solomon
South Precinct Crime Prevention Coordinator